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PUBLIC NOTICE of EMERGENCY PERMIT MODIFICATION
Underground Injection Wells at
Hamilton County Coal,
in unincorporated Hamilton County, near Dahlgren, IL

The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency has issued an emergency Underground Injection Control (UIC) well permit modification to Hamilton County Coal, LLC., formerly White Oak Resources, LLC. located at 18033 County Road 500 East, Dahlgren, Illinois. A Class I non-hazardous waste UIC permit was issued on August 1, 2016 authorizing injection well WWDW#1 to begin injecting wastewater. However, Hamilton County Coal later found that modifications needed to be made to well WWDW#1 before it could be used for the long-term injection of wastewater generated at the facility. The wastewater is groundwater that is infiltrates into the coal mine at this facility and is high in chloride and dissolved solids. This wastewater is removed from the mine and stored in a pond (surface impoundment) that is approaching its maximum capacity.

The emergency UIC permit modification, effective August 31, 2017, allows the Permittee to modify the Annulus Protection System (APS) of well WWDW#1, by adding additional well annulus fluid storage capacity and additional equipment to more precisely control and monitor the annulus pressure of the well. This will allow injection of wastewater at well WWDW#1 to resume, reducing the amount of wastewater present in the storage pond and preventing the unpermitted release of wastewater or the flooding of the mine. This groundwater presents a threat to mine workers from flooding of the mine, and if released to surface waters at the volumes being generated would create a threat to the health of persons near the facility. The wastewaters are injected at well WWDW#1 at a depth between 8,000 and 12,000 feet underground into limestone and sandstone formations. These geological formations are overlain by a 160 foot thick confining layer of shale bedrock, minimizing the potential for injected fluids to migrate upward.

This temporary emergency UIC permit was issued in accordance with 35 IAC 704.163. The applicants have also submitted a non-emergency UIC permit modification request for the modified APS for continued operation of well WWDW#1. The emergency permit will be supplanted by the non-emergency, long-term UIC permit only after public review and comment on a draft UIC permit modification and, subsequently, the Agency makes its final permitting decision. Please contact Rachel Stewart (see below) if you wish to be added to the mailing list for notice of this future, non-emergency UIC permitting process.

Those interested may review the emergency permit application materials and the emergency UIC permit at the McCoy Memorial Library, West Side Square, McLeansboro.

The Administrative Record for this emergency permit (application, permit and all data submitted to the Agency) is available for inspection by appointment only at IEPA's Springfield office, contact:

Rachel Stewart (#5)

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Illinois EPA

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The Safe Drinking Water Act of 1976 established the federal UIC program to protect groundwater resources. UIC program requirements were designed to prevent contamination of underground sources of drinking water. The Illinois EPA is authorized to administer certain aspects of the UIC program in Illinois. Illinois' UIC regulations may be found at 35 IAC 702, 704, 705 and 730.